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Premier builds consensus on 27th Amendment

- Meets allies to secure their support; tweaks top agenda as Cabinet meets today; draft may be tabled following nod
- PPP rejects any cut to provinces' NFC share; backs limited changes to Article 243
- Remains non-committal on constitutional court for now
- Tarar sees no 'major roadblocks' to new legislation
- PTI says current govt lacks mandate to amend Constitution

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday held consultations with ruling allies to secure support for the controversial 27th Constitutional Amendment, with the government expected to table the bill in the Senate within days.

The prime minister has also convened a meeting of the federal cabinet today (Friday), with the 27th Amendment topping the agenda. Sources said the amendment could be introduced in parliament after cabinet approval.

The premier is due to depart for Azerbaijan later in the day for a one-day official visit.

Some media reports suggested PM Shehbaz has decided to establish a parliamentary committee bringing all parties together to fine-tune the draft and seek consensus. However, there was no confirmation from the Prime Minister's Office.

It has been learnt that all government allies, except the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), have assured conditional support, provided the 18th Amendment is not rolled back.

The PPP leadership, which met the prime minister earlier this week, reiterated at its Central Executive Committee meeting on Thursday that it would safeguard the 18th Amendment.

On the other hand, the government is said to be adamant about getting the 27th Amendment passed next week. The plan is to move the 27th Amendment first in the Senate and then in the National Assembly.

As constitutional amendments require a two-thirds majority in both houses, winning over the PPP remains pivotal. The next two days are said to be quite crucial in this regard.

Meetings with ruling coalition

Meanwhile, a delegation of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) led by its convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui called on PM Shehbaz on Thursday.

A statement by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said "discussion and consultation took place on the proposed 27th Amendment" during the meeting.

The delegation also included Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori, Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal, MNAs Dr Farooq Sattar, Jawed Hanif Khan, Syed Aminul Haque and Khawaja Izharul Hassan, the statement added.

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar and others also attended the meeting. They were also present in PM Shehbaz's meetings with the delegations of the Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party (IPP) and Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q).

The IPP delegation was led by party president and Communications Minister Abdul Aleem Khan and Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis Aun Chaudhry, while the PML-Q team was led by Overseas Pakistanis Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain, with Senator Kamil Ali Agha and MNAs Mohammad Ilyas Choudhary and Farukh Khan in

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SIDON: Civil defence personnel stand on rubble after Israeli air strikes destroyed several buildings in Tayr Debba, southern Lebanon, on Thursday. As Israel resumed its air strikes against Hezbollah in the country's south this week after a brief pause, the group publicly asserted its right to defend itself and rejected the prospect of direct talks between Lebanon and Israel.—Reuters Report on Page 11

Gaza peace plan may prove tough nut to crack

- US shares draft resolution with Security Council members, Muslim bloc
- Diplomatic sources say draft lacks language necessary to fully empower Gaza force, Board of Peace
- Washington estimates ISF will be 20,000-strong, have two-year mandate

By Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: With the United Nations Security Council set to begin negotiations on a US-drafted resolution seeking endorsement of President Donald Trump's peace plan for Gaza, it looks increasingly likely that the mandate of a proposed international force may prove to be a major bone of contention.

On Thursday, the United States begun expert-level discussions on the resolution with representatives from key Arab and Muslim states.

It formally circulated the draft resolution to the 15 council members a day earlier, and officials claimed to have regional support from Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and the United Arab Emirates for the text.

On Wednesday, Michael Waltz, the US Representative at the United Nations, convened a meeting of all 10 elected members of the UN Security Council to "demonstrate regional support for the resolution to the UN Security Council on Gaza."

Mediators propose deal to get Hamas fighters out of Rafah: Page 12

Representatives of Algeria, Denmark, Greece, Guyana, Pakistan, Panama, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, and Somalia participated.

UN ambassadors from Egypt, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, T rkiye, and the United Arab Emirates also attended the meeting.

The goal of the resolution, according to a statement, is to welcome the Board of Peace and authorise the International Stabilisation Force (ISF) outlined in President Trump's 20-point plan.

Dawn reached out to Pakistan's Foreign Office, but there was no official acknowledgement that Islamabad had received the draft, until the filing of this report.

Meanwhile, US outlet Axios reported that Ambassador Waltz also met Palestinian diplomats in New York to discuss the draft Security Council resolution.

A council resolution needs at least nine votes in favour and no vetoes by Russia, China, France, Britain or the United States to be adopted.

Linguistic spin

According to diplomats privy to the draft, the language normally used when the Security Council wants strong action — like sending in a force — comes under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which gives it the legal authority to use coercive measures when it decides that a situation is a serious threat to

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Govt agrees to attend PTI's peace jirga in KP

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD/PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and Safron Amir Muqam announced on Thursday that the federal government would take part in the upcoming peace jirga called by the PTI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The announcement was made as Mr Muqam, who is also the PML-N's KP president, held a joint press conference alongside PTI stalwart Asad Qaiser in Islamabad.

CM Afridi questions 'pressure on courts' amid case delays: Page 3

Earlier this week, the PTI decided to convene a peace jirga in the KP Assembly on Nov 12 to discuss the volatile law and order situation in the province.

"We have conveyed our requests to the federal government and are grateful that they accepted our invitation," Mr Qaiser said while jointly addressing reporters after the meeting.

"We have come together and we know what policy we want. Whatever it is, the province's people and leadership need to come together to create a concerted plan of action," he added.

In response to a question, Mr Muqam said that the PTI presented "the reason why we are here" and that the government accepted it. "They said they wanted peace and that we are all one," he continued.

Meanwhile, Mr Qaiser wrote a post on X announcing that a delegation he

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Legal experts question rationale behind new legislation plan

- Former law officer says nation must brace itself for long struggle against 'praetorian judges'
- Ruling elite has inflicted unprecedented harm on independence of judiciary, Akram Sheikh argues

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: As speculations swirl around the controversial 27th Constitutional Amendment, legal experts have questioned the rationale behind such constitutional tweaks, especially after the previous 26th Amendment that had effectively brought the superior judiciary under the executive's control.

The "final draft" of this Amendment has hitherto been kept under wraps, but its contours were recently shared by PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari when he said a prime minister-led delegation had sought the PPP's support for its passage. In a statement, he said the proposal included setting up constitutional courts, restoring executive magistrates, matters related to the transfer of judges, ending the protection of provincial shares under the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award, and amending Article 243, which pertains to the command of the armed forces.

While some see it as a continuation of the 26th Amendment, a senior counsel questioned the reason behind such a move at a time when the government had not lost even a single constitutional case in the superior court.

"Not a single case pertaining to constitutional interpretations, be it the reserved seat case, judges transfer matter, military courts case, or matters relating to taxes, has ever been lost by the federal government after the passage of the 26th Amendment," remarked the counsel on condition of anonymity. Then what is the rationale behind stirring up the controversy at this juncture, he wondered.

Except for enhancing the retirement age limit from the existing 65 years, that too of 'a few friends', what the proposed constitutional court will be doing when the federal government has not lost a single major case from the

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Border trouble tests truce as Pak-Afghan talks resume

- Islamabad says demands 'non-negotiable' as third round opens in Istanbul
- Taliban leader asks Afghan team to only make 'realistic' commitments
- Flare-up at Chaman-Spin Boldak looms over talks; at least two killed

By Baqir Sajjad Syed

ISLAMABAD: The third round of Pakistan-Afghanistan talks opened in Istanbul on Thursday, surviving a brief exchange of fire along the border that tested a shaky ceasefire.

Mediated by Turkiye and Qatar and held at the Conrad Hotel with restricted media access, the two-day round is focused on finalising a framework for a "monitoring and verification mechanism" agreed in principle last week, and on addressing long-standing disputes linked to militant sanctuaries inside Afghanistan.

Pakistan's delegation is led by Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Director General Lt Gen Asim Malik and includes senior military, intelligence and Foreign Office officials.

The Afghan Taliban side is headed by General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI) chief Abdul Haq Waseq and includes senior figures such as Suhail Shaheen, Anas Haqqani and Deputy Interior Minister Rehmatullah Najib.

The current dialogue process began after deadly clashes along the border last month — the worst since the Taliban's 2021 takeover of Kabul. Pakistan accused the Taliban of harbouring militants from Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), responsible for a series of cross-border attacks. The Taliban denied the accusations and accused Islamabad of airstrikes inside Afghan territory.

A ceasefire was brokered in Doha on Oct 19 through Qatari mediation, followed by two rounds

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Women's public role realisation of long-denied right: SC

Justice Shah calls on legislators, policymakers to stop enacting or interpreting laws in a manner that subordinates women to patriarchal or marital constructs

ISLAMABAD: Expounding on an earlier ruling, the Supreme Court on Thursday held that participation of women in the public sphere was not a benevolent concession, but a realisation of a right long denied.

"When women contribute across education, administration, policy, health, and justice, institutions draw upon a broader spectrum of experience, enhancing the quality, legitimacy and responsiveness of governance," observed Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah while setting aside the Feb 14, 2024, order of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Service Tribunal, Peshawar.

In March this year, Justice Shah had ruled in a similar case that a woman's legal rights, personhood and autonomy were neither erased by marriage nor should they depend on it.

On Thursday, he explained that women's equal participation in public life was not simply a means to personal financial independence, but it was a structural driver of socio-economic development, good governance, and constitutional democracy.

This has been recognised internationally through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and by comparative constitutional jurisprudence that advocates affirmative measures to correct gender imbalance in public services.

The dispute before a two-judge Supreme Court bench headed by Justice Shah was whether marriage would disqualify a daughter from appointment under the quota reserved for children of civil servants who die or become incapacitated while in service.

The controversy pertains to petitioner Ms Farakh Naz, an employee of the KP education department, who was appointed in place of her mother after she retired from service on medical grounds in April 2022.

Ms Naz's appointment order as a primary school teacher in Karak was withdrawn without any notice in 2023 after she got married. This termination was based on a clarification letter of February 2022, which stipulated that the benefit of appointment under the quota was not available to a female who has contracted marriage.

Further, an April 28, 2023, clarification provided that a married daughter may again be considered eligible for appointment if she has separated from her husband and is dependent on her parents. Aggrieved by her termination order, the petitioner filed a departmental appeal against the order, which was rejected in August 2023. Consequently, the petitioner preferred an appeal before the KP tribunal, challenging the impugned order, which was dismissed in February 2024.

In his 11-page verdict, Justice Shah asked legislators and policymakers to recognise women as autonomous individuals and refrain from enacting or interpreting laws in a manner that subordinates their personhood to patriarchal or marital constructs.

The exclusion or "othering" of women — particularly on the grounds of matrimony — constitutes a direct assault on their dignity and equality and denies them the fundamental rights that attach to their independent selves.

Terminations like that of the petitioner, resting upon patriarchal readings of the rule or policy, not only violate the identity and rights of women but also impoverish society and future generations, who are thereby deprived of the intellect, values, and perspectives that women uniquely bring to public life, the verdict explained.

Justice Shah observed that being married was not a disqualification that strips a woman of her personhood or her constitutional entitlements; marriage merely alters her legal status, not her fundamental rights.

A woman like a man is a "person" under the Constitution — and this constitutional status of her personhood remains undisturbed through marriage or divorce. The view that a daughter (and not the son) is always dependent upon her father and thereafter as a wife is always dependent upon her husband is constitutionally unsustainable.

Such a notion undermines her individuality and erodes her identity as a person in her own right, Justice Shah observed and cited Martha C. Nussbaum — an American philosopher — who had said: "A society that denies women equal opportunities for full human functioning denies itself justice."—Nasir Iqbal

ON OTHER PAGES

PIA sacks union's top officials

Society of Aircraft Engineers of Pakistan President Abdullah Jadoon and Secretary General Awais Jadoon were dismissed from service on Thursday. The PIA's dismissal letters stated that they were served notices for holding an unauthorised presser, for sharing official information with the media, and disclosure of confidential operational details as well as the carrier's images. **Page 3**

Digital portal for investment in govt papers

The State Bank on Thursday launched a new digital platform, opening another channel for individuals and corporates to invest in government securities. SBP said web portal InvestPak has been developed to digitise the process of investing in government papers for customers maintaining rupee accounts with banks, primary dealers and microfinance banks. **Page 9**